

For Immediate Release

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**STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCES ACCEPTANCE OF POTASSIUM IODIDE
SUPPLY FROM NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

(Richmond, Va.)— Virginia Health Commissioner Robert B. Stroube, M.D., M.P.H. today announced that Virginia will accept a supply of potassium iodide from the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission to add protection to citizens living near Virginia's two nuclear power plants.

"The potassium iodide medication is not a substitute for emergency procedures, such as evacuation and in-place sheltering during a nuclear emergency," Dr. Stroube said. "However, it is one more protective measure we can provide to help safeguard Virginia citizens if an emergency occurs at a nuclear power plant."

Potassium iodide is a non-prescription medication that, taken in an appropriate and timely dosage, can block exposure to radioactive iodine, one of the contaminants that could be released in a nuclear accident or similar event. Exposure to radioactive iodine can increase the risk of thyroid cancer.

Virginia will request 660,000 doses of potassium iodide for an estimated 330,000 citizens who live, work or visit within 10 miles of the Surry Nuclear Power Station located in Surry County and the North Anna Nuclear Power Station located in Louisa County.

Interim plans call for the Virginia Department of Health to maintain a supply of potassium iodide near the two nuclear power plants. If a nuclear accident should occur, citizens living near the two nuclear power plants will be informed by the Department of Emergency Management through emergency notification systems on when, where and how to get their dose of potassium iodide.

"Potassium iodide is most effective if taken within a few hours before, during, or immediately after exposure," said Dr. Stroube. "The medication can help prevent thyroid cancer, especially in children. Children are more likely to develop thyroid cancer following exposure to radioactive iodine."

People allergic to iodine should avoid taking potassium iodide. People with certain thyroid diseases, such as Grave's disease, thyroiditis, and goiter, and people with known skin diseases should consult their physicians before taking potassium iodide.

The Virginia Department of Health and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, in cooperation with local governments, will be developing final plans for distribution and administration of potassium iodide to the public in case of a radiation release from the nuclear power plants.

According to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, fifteen other states have requested and/or received potassium iodide tablets as of June 28, 2002. Those states include Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maryland, Vermont, Delaware, Florida, Alabama, Arizona, New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, California, Ohio, and New Hampshire.

For more information on potassium iodide, log onto the Virginia Department of Health's Web site at www.vdh.state.va.us, and click onto "Hot Issues."